



## Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs

For Immediate Release  
June 11, 2008

Lisa Aug (502) 564-9203  
[Lisa.Aug@ky.gov](mailto:Lisa.Aug@ky.gov)  
[www.kdva.net](http://www.kdva.net)

# Married Navy Veterans, Bowling Green Group on 2<sup>nd</sup> Kentucky Honor Flight

*39 World War II Kentucky Veterans in D.C. today*

*Attached Photos: Lew Graham, Ralph Holman, Les Spillman and Buddy Bradford from Bowling Green. Jean and John Pogue of Danville.*

(LOUISVILLE, KY June 5, 2008) A couple of sailors married for 58 years and a group of friends from Bowling Green were among the Kentucky veterans of World War II on this morning's Honor Flight to the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Jean and John Pogue knew each other in high school in Fort Thomas, but joined the Navy separately when war broke out. Today they took a break from operating their family distillery in Danville to see the National Memorial to their service.

Making this morning's flight meant a night mission for four Navy and Air Force veterans from Bowling Green.

"We started out at midnight," said Navy veteran Ralph Holman. "We've been planning this since November." He and fellow Navy veteran Buddy Bradford, and Air Force veterans Les Spillman and Lew Graham all know each other from the First Baptist Church, and were eager and excited this morning even after the long drive up I-65 to the airport.

Kentucky's first Honor Flight flew 40 World War II veterans to Washington May 20. Three more flights of 40 veterans each are scheduled for August, September and October. But more than 100 Kentucky World War II veterans still wait to hear about another flight, and hope it won't be too late for them. Four of the veterans originally scheduled for the May 20 flight died before the departure date – the last one just two days before.

“This noble undertaking has a very finite window,” says Brian Duffy, the Vietnam War veteran and UPS pilot who operates Honor Flight of the Bluegrass. “Our youngest World War II veterans are now in their mid-80s. Financial support equals more veterans being able to make the trip.”

More flights on larger planes to accommodate more veterans require more money. Honor Flight is run entirely by volunteers and financed by donations. The flight, meals, ground transportation and individual support is completely free to the veterans.

Each flight, based on 40 veterans and 15 guardian/escorts (who pay their own way), costs between \$10,000 and \$11,000, Duffy says. That breaks down to about \$8,000 in air fare, \$1,200 for the bus from the airport to the Memorial and back, \$1,100 for three meals including a restaurant buffet, and \$700 for miscellaneous, including T-shirts, memorial books, ID badges and lanyards.

To begin Kentucky Honor Flights, Honor Flight Bluegrass Chapter received \$25,000 from the Veterans Program Trust Fund, which is administered by the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs. Since May 21, Honor Flight Bluegrass has received approximately \$10,500 in direct donations, which with existing funds should cover the June, August and September flights. The cost of the October flight and possible additional flights is not yet covered. Honor Flight Bluegrass is also seeking additional guardians for the September and October flights.

To make donations, volunteer to help, or find out more about Honor Flight Bluegrass Chapter, go to [www.honorflightbluegrass.com](http://www.honorflightbluegrass.com).

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, there are an estimated 36,569 World War II veterans living in Kentucky.

As the national Honor Flight organization notes:

“Very few of these senior veterans have the logistical knowledge or physical strength to complete an unescorted conventional trip to Washington, D.C.

“It is our mission to honor as many of these remaining selfless ‘ordinary people who saved the world’ as we can by providing them an organized and expense-paid, escorted day trip to visit their memorial.

“Volunteer guardians (escorts) pay their own way, and personally assist the senior veterans throughout the trip.”